

Effort To Avoid Undercover Agents Fails

(orig under James)

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We were in Brussels now and despite our efforts to stay away from undercover agents from the U.S. Air Force Foreign Technology Division, known in spy circles as the Air Force Mafia, we had been spotted by the agent who had us under surveillance in Marseille.

My second encounter with the agent after our abrupt meeting at the elevator door of the Arnigo Hotel was at the Congress Palace, where Belgian authorities had permitted me to attend an Apollo 15 astronauts' press conference.

The agent caught up with me after the conference, grabbed me by the elbow and with his breath blowing in my face, asked: "How did you manage to get in and listen to the press conference? You're not with the press, are you?" His eyes showed hatred, as if he were fearful that the press had learned about his surveillance of Americans abroad.

Some of the best KGB intelligence agents in Russia were sent to watch their delegation. They spotted the Air Force Mafia agents immediately. In the past, these conferences have been attended by top Russian KGB agents, such as the mastermind of the Christine Keeler-John Profumo sex scandal that rocked Great Britain in the early 1960s who work smoothly and professionally.

By comparison, Air Force Mafia agents often seem like the bulls in the china shop. They are known as "clowns" in U.S. intelligence circles.

One of the division agents, spent most of the afternoon eavesdropping on discussions between me and officials of the USSR Academy of Sciences and State Committee for Science and Technology.

One Russian, Valery Skatchkov, a liaison officer who had been in contact with the Executive Office of the President during the preliminary discussions on U.S.-USSR space cooperation, did not care for the heavy surveillance. He hopped from conference room to conference room, but the division agents were always on his heels.

In theory, espionage agents should not be seen, identified, or bother third parties.

That evening, when my wife and I were getting into a taxi, the same bearded American that the KGB had warned me about in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, insisted on taking the same taxi with us. He cross-examined me and was particularly interested in who was paying my expenses.

I told him we were paying our own way because I was doing research for a future book.

The next day, on Tuesday, Sept. 21, U.S. surveillance within the Congress Palace was stepped up and I found it impossible to carry on any type of discussion without being overheard. I wrote a letter on a coffee table in the lobby and an agent made several passes trying to read it.

In the gardens of the Congress Palace a man whom I suspected was collaborating with the Air Force Mafia took several close-up pictures of Diane; these pictures could assist clandestine agents who might be asked to place us under surveillance.

The KGB responded to the surveillance of their scientists by overprotecting them. This made it difficult for legitimate members of the American delegation to meet their Soviet counterparts.

In the evening we attended a reception in the 15th Century Town Hall in the Grand Place. Brussels dominated by aristocratic, ornate buildings.

During the reception the Russians asked Diane to take pictures of them — we usually exchanged cards and photos during Christmas — and she obliged.

"If you don't stop taking so many pictures, people will think you are an agent of the CIA," said the Library of Congress agent suddenly grabbing Diane's arm.

"Maybe I am," Diane said, trying to fend him off.

"Ahhh, I see. You are making it so obvious that no one will suspect you. Very clever."

Diane got away from the man but then an aerospace engineer from California called out: "You know, every year when the CIA comes to visit me, they ask, 'What are the Jameses doing?' " He emphasized the names CIA and James.

Finally Diane got away from the two and told me what had happened. It appeared that the agents were trying to discredit us with the Soviet scientists by implying that we cooperated with the CIA.

At the end of the reception, a foreign news reporter invited us to dinner. After I accepted, he said the Library of Congress agent would join us.

I could have declined the invitation as I had done in Konstanz in 1970 and more recently in Marseille, when total strangers invited us to dinner, but this time I wanted to get at the root of the conspiracy and determine how high up it went.

We were joined by the agent and two of his friends, a man who reminded me of a big city lawyer and another who resembled the late movie actor Gary Cooper. I refer to them as "the lawyer" and "Cooper."

Unknown to me at the time, as we walked through the Grand Place, the agent shoved Diane and said, "Move." He selected a table in a crowded restaurant where several of his cohorts, including the American pointed out by the KGB in Dubrovnik, were dining.

Diane sat between the agent and the Lawyer while I sat opposite Diane, boxed in by Cooper and the foreign correspondent.

The agent brought up Daniel Ellsberg and his disclosure of the Pentagon Papers. He criticized Ellsberg, called him a do-gooder, and said that do-gooders always interfered with the operations of the U.S. government.

"Some people think they can scare the government by threatening to write a book!" the agent shouted. The purpose of the Dubrovnik and Marseille charades were finally coming out. As I suspected, the Foreign Technology Division brass were worried that I was writing about their questionable operations.

"And if they don't get their way, or they're rejected, they'll threaten to cause trouble," he continued shouting.

He looked me in the eye and yelled, "I hate people who blackball someone for life."

He was now referring to the Florida Center manager investigated by the FBI and the U.S. State Department. The company's investigation disclosed that the manager was improperly and covertly dealing with division agents. Although these agents obviously held me responsible for the investigation, the FBI and State Department actually had acted on their own.

"I hate do-gooders," the agent said again.

"Perhaps you've misunderstood the problem," I said. "It seems to me that Ellsberg was motivated by other considerations."

"I have a very good understanding of the problem," he retorted, tapping a knife on the edge of his wine glass. "If Uncle Sam tells me to do a job, then by God, I'm going to do it my way! . . . I can say that I have friends in the Mafia who can arrange an automobile accident. I'd be asked questions later, and I'd have a

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